



The Foundation celebrates 10 years

From the desk of Joanne Murphy, Board Chair

For 10 years, the RTOERO Foundation has been improving the way we age in Canada. We are one of the only foundations in Canada to focus solely on the issues affecting our older population.

The RTOERO Foundation was established in 2011 in order to raise funds to establish an endowed Chair in Geriatric Medicine at the University of Toronto. The position is currently held by Dr. Paula Rochon, Senior Scientist at the Women's College Research Institute in Toronto. We are thrilled that Dr. Rochon has been awarded another 5-year term. Her recent focus has been on understanding gender differences in the aging experience. Dr. Rochon and her team make significant contributions to academic research across a broad range of areas including loneliness and social isolation, caregiving, and the long-term care home situation in Canada.

We are still a young Foundation, but we are extremely proud of all that we have accomplished in the past decade. In 2015 we introduced our annual granting program and this remains the core of our work. To date, the Foundation has awarded a total of \$2,974,294.

This money has been invested in critical research and innovative programming in geriatrics, gerontology, and social isolation. These initiatives are funded through the generous support of our members and sponsors.

In 2018 we launched our Social Isolation Awareness Month campaign. The campaign proved to be successful in creating awareness and conversation around the issue of social isolation. While awareness is important, it is not enough to help those who are currently in need of social connection. In response, we have created a new program called *Chime In* that is exclusive to RTOERO members. *Chime In* establishes a safe, regularly scheduled social gathering online, which will provide the chance for members to connect with other members. We hope participants will discover new activities and even find new friends. You can read more about this exciting new program on page 3.

We are so excited to bring you along with us as we grow our programs and increase our impact over the next 10 years. This is your RTOERO Foundation; together we're paving the way for a healthier future not only for ourselves but for our children and our grandchildren.

Social isolation affects us all – no matter our age

The light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel is starting to shine a little brighter as the economy begins to reopen and we start gathering with family and friends. We have all spent the better part of a year and a half in a state of social isolation and the process of reconnecting can be overwhelming.

We've mentioned in previous newsletter articles and in our June 2020 appeal letter that the impact of social isolation has been particularly exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Angus Reid Institute (ARI), a Canadian non-profit independent research foundation, conducted a recent study comparing the rate and frequency of social isolation and loneliness among Canadians of all ages in 2019 versus 2020.

Participants in the study fell into three age categories: 18 - 34, 35 - 54, 55+. These statistics confirm what we all suspected last year – that the pandemic would increase the rates of loneliness and isolation among Canadians. We all need to focus on recovering our social activity and reconnecting with those we've missed over the last year and a half.

To this end, the Foundation is launching a new program called *Chime In* to help RTOERO members reconnect with one another. *Chime In* is designed to help with the transition out of loneliness and isolation back to a state where we all have meaningful social connection in our lives once again.

Some key findings from the study:

- The overall rate of feeling "somewhat isolated" rose from 22% to 27%.
- The overall rate of feeling "very isolated" rose from 29% to 43%.
- The rate of those in the 18 – 34 age range who felt "very isolated" was 47% compared to 35% of those in the 55+ group.
- The rate of older adults who would rather see more people has nearly doubled from 18% to 33%.
- The rate of Canadians who describe their mental health as only "fair, poor, or very poor" increased from 30% to 47%.
- Canadians of all ages have been leaning on technology as a means of staying connected.
- The rate of those 55+ who have been using video calling technology jumped from 36% to 55%.

Read the full study here:

www.angusreid.org/isolation-and-loneliness-covid19/





Foundation takes action to address social isolation

After more than a year of stay-at-home orders and social isolation, there is finally a light at the end of the tunnel. However, as lockdown ends and the world begins to reopen, we realize that some of our members may continue to feel cut off from social activity and in need of interaction and connection with others.

That's why the RTOERO Foundation is inviting you to *Chime In*.

The Foundation launched Social Isolation Awareness Month in 2018, but feedback from RTOERO members helped us see that our programming needed to evolve from awareness to action; to help those who might be feeling isolated and alone. This insight led us to create *Chime In*; a new, ongoing program designed to help RTOERO members connect with one another and enjoy regular social activity.

Chime In launches on October 6th 2021. Foundation volunteers will host an open conversation hour on Zoom every Wednesday from 1pm – 2pm EST. You can join using Zoom or you can call in by phone.

Chime In is a platform for open conversation and connection. *Chime In* is all about you and will be following your lead. You might decide to focus on a particular topic each week, or you might simply want to chat with folks who share similar interests and hobbies. Above all, we want you to enjoy the chance to connect with other members and even find new friends.

Please visit www.rtoerofoundation.ca/chimein to sign up for the program, and start enjoying the opportunity to engage and connect. For more information or help signing up, please email foundation@rtoero.ca or call the RTOERO Foundation at 416-962-9463 ext. 271.

We can't wait for you to join us in October as we all *Chime In*.

Sign up for *Chime In* at:
www.rtoerofoundation.ca/chimein



UTIs on the rise as we age

Article courtesy of **Utiva Health**



Urinary tract infections (UTIs) can become more frequent as we age. During menopause, women go through significant transformation and a decrease in estrogen levels is one of the biggest ones. This can make them more susceptible to bacterial infections and also cause other changes to the urinary tract and sensitive areas. The result can often be an increase in the frequency of UTIs.

In men, incomplete bladder emptying is one of the most common causes of UTIs. We have all heard about prostate issues and as men age the prostate becomes enlarged. This enlargement creates an environment in the bladder that increases the chance of infection, due to bacteria that have not been flushed out. This is one of the causes of UTIs in men over the age of 60.

How can I prevent UTIs?

The first step to preventing UTIs is to hydrate by drinking plenty of water... not juice! This helps to ensure you are urinating frequently and flushing unwanted bacteria out of your system.

Also, consider taking a daily UTI prevention supplement. Utiva's UTI Control Supplement is clinically proven to stop bacteria from causing infection. Each capsule contains 36 mg of cranberry-derived PACs at 15% concentration - the highest on the market. Backed by science and doctor recommended, this all-natural supplement can significantly reduce the chances of frequent UTIs in older adults.

RTOERO members can enjoy 25% off their first order of Utiva products. Please visit www.utivahealth.ca or call 1-888-622-3613 and use the special code **RT025**.

The giving continues

We asked, and you responded with increasing generosity. Your actions have proven once again that our members and donors desire to create a better future for all of us as we age.

Earlier this year we sent out our **Impact Report appeal** in hopes that you would consider supporting critical research and innovative programming which are funded through donor-supported grant programs —and once again, you came through for us. Because of you, the RTOERO Foundation raised **\$45,850**.

More recently, we sent you a letter that told the story of Bill* who was misdiagnosed with Alzheimer's, but whose story thankfully had a happy ending.

Our **Better Care campaign** ensures aging with dignity won't be left to chance. We invited you to help us build a future where all seniors in Canada get the medical attention they deserve—and you did!

We raised an incredible **\$60,898**.

Thank you!

*name has been changed to protect confidentiality



Contact!

We'd love to hear from you.



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